Political Science 338:
Policy Evaluation

Spring, 2018
Professor Stein
Tue./Thurs. 9:25-10:40AM
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Required texts:

*Donald Stanley and Julian Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*
David Weimer and Aidan Vining, *Policy Analysis* 4th or higher edition
*Shahidur R. Khandker, Gayatri B. Koolwal and Hussain A. Samad, *Handbook on Impact Evaluation*, World Bank (Available as a free *ebook* at http://www.stata.com/bookstore/hoie.html)

* Readings available at course Canvass web site

Course requirements:

Midterm:	100 points
Team papers	
1st Paper	100
2nd Paper	100
3rd Paper	100

Course overview:

This course provides an introduction to how policies, in the public and private sector, can be analyzed and evaluated for their intended and unintended impact. Students will be expected to master a core literature on the methods of policy analysis and evaluation.

For the first six weeks of the semester class time will be devoted to group discussions and lectures on assigned readings. At the sixth week of the semester students will take a midterm examination to test their understanding of the basic concepts and tools of policy analysis and evaluation. After the midterm students will work in teams to evaluate current federal, state and local public policies. Each research team will complete a policy briefing memo and make a class presentation.

Team projects:

After the midterm exam (take home exam due 5 PM on 2/8) student teams will meet twice weekly during the class time (Tuesday and Thursday) in our assigned classroom to work on their team project. Research teams comprised of 4-5 students per team will be assigned a specific

research question for investigation. Students will be expected to review literatures on the policy question, identify best practices, make policy recommendations, provide supporting data for these recommendations and design a program for implementing and evaluating the policy recommendation. I will be available to consult with each team during the scheduled class time and by appointment.

Syllabus

January 9, 11, 16, 18:

Topics: Policy Analysis

Policy making process
Policy subsystems
Punctuated equilibrium theory
The electoral connection

Readings:

*Bryan Jones and Frank Baumgartner. 2012. "From there to here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing," *The Policy Studies Journal* 40(1,2012):1-1.

*Keith Hamm. 1986. "The role of 'subgovernments' in U.S. State Policy Making: An Exploratory Analysis," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 11:321-351.

*Hank C. Jenkins-Smith, Gilbert K. St. Clair and Brian Woods. 1991. "Explaining Change in Policy Subsystems: Analysis of Coalition Stability and Defection over Time." *American Journal of Political Science*, 35: 851-880

Robert M. Stein and Kenneth N. Bickers. 1994. "Universalism and the Electoral Connection: A Test and Some Doubts," *Political Research Quarterly* 47:295-317

January 23, 25 30, Feb 1

Topics: Policy Evaluation

Qualitative evaluation
Quantitative evaluation
Evidence based evaluation
Policy intent
Research designs

Readings:

Weimer and Vining, Chapters, 8-13
*"What is a Research Design?"
*"Steps for Successful Policy Analysis"
Khandker et al, Chapter 2: Basic Issues of Evaluation

February 6, 13, 15

Topics: Experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational designs
Pre-experimental
True experimental
Validity and reliability
Correlational designs

Readings:

*Campbell and Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*

February 20, 22, 27 March 1

Topics: Correlational and statistical designs

Propensity matching
Difference-in-difference
Instrumental variables
Regression discontinuity
Survey experiments

Readings:

Shahidur R. Khandker, Gayatri B. Koolwal and Hussain A. Samad, *Handbook on Impact Evaluation*, Chapters 3-7

*Gerber, Alan S. & Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effect of Nonpartisan Get-Out-the Vote Drive: An Experimental Study of Leafletting." *Journal of Politics* 462 (3):

*Stein, Robert & Greg Vonnahme. 2008. "Engaging the Unengaged Voter: Vote Centers and Voter Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 487–497

* Stein, Robert, Birnur Buzcu-Guven, Leonardo Duenas-Osorio, Devika Subramanisan. 2014. "The Private and Social Benefits of Preparing for Natural Disasters," *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 32(3):49-483

*Green, Donald P. and Daniel Winik. "Estimating the Effects of Incarceration and Probation on Recidivism among Drug Offenders." In 2010. *Criminology*. 48(2): 357-387.

*David Card and Alan B. Krueger. 1994. "Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast-Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania." *American Economic Review* 84:772-

*Gerber, Elizabeth and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2011. "When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 55 (2): 326–339

*Kam, Cindy D and Carl L. Palmer. 2008. "Reconsidering the Effects of Education on Political Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 70 (3): 612-631

*Johnson, Martin, W. Phillips Shively, and Robert Stein. 2002. "Contextual Data and the Study of Elections and Voting Behavior: Connecting Individuals to Environments." *Electoral Studies* 21 (2): 219-233

Midterm exam March 8

March 13

Topics: Policy case studies

Readings:

*Houston Parks and Recreation Department #1: Keeping parks safe for users
*Houston Public Library: Neighborhood library use
*Under wear for everyone
*City of Houston SafeClear Program: Balancing safety and congestion
*Historic Preservation
*Vote by mail elections
*Locating Women and Infant care facilities

March 20- April 5
Research team meetings

April 10-19 (additional presentations on scheduled final date)
Team Presentations

<u>Team paper due dates</u>
March 23
Literature review and best practices
Reading: * Policy Briefing Outline
March 30
Proposal for implementation and evaluation
May 2
Final policy memo